

EPA's Office of Policy

ISSUE SUMMARY:

The Office of Policy (OP) is the primary policy arm of EPA. OP works with colleagues throughout the agency to support EPA priorities and enhance decision-making. OP provides multi-disciplinary analytic skills, management support, and expertise in the following areas: regulatory policy and management, environmental economics and risk assessment, community revitalization, environmental justice, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), environmental permitting, climate adaptation, standards and sector-based stakeholder engagement.

Office of Regulatory Policy and Management (ORPM) focuses on ensuring an efficient and effective regulatory decision-making process and oversees consistent policies and procedures for rule writing across programs. ORPM promotes transparency and public involvement by providing information on regulation development, including the production of EPA's Semiannual Regulatory Agenda, and leads the agency's coordination with the Office of Management and Budget's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) and other federal agencies. ORPM participates directly in rule development workgroups, leads consideration of potential burdens on small entities, reviews and transmits *Federal Register* notices for publication, manages EPA compliance with the Congressional Review Act, and ensures statutory and executive order directives are considered in regulations.

National Center for Environmental Economics (NCEE) also participates in regulation development workgroups specifically to review and help program offices develop economic analyses for all economically significant regulations to inform the policy making process and meet Executive Order and statutory requirements. NCEE develops training for agency economists, ensures consistent analytic treatment across EPA offices, and engages with OMB, the White House Council of Economic Advisers (CEA), and other agencies on cross-cutting economic issues and reports. NCEE develops and maintains EPA's *Guidelines for Preparing Economic Analyses* and helps fill critical gaps in the agency's ability to quantify benefits and costs (e.g., valuing time demanded by EPA's Information Collection Requests and regulations). NCEE developed the EPA's first economy-wide economic model to assess how regulations affect the overall U.S. economy, including distributional impacts, costs, and broader macroeconomic performance. NCEE also houses the Agency's Statistical Official, a position mandated by the Foundation for Evidence Based Policy Act, who provides statistical and technical support for evidence-based policy activities.

Office of Community Revitalization (OCR) leads agencywide implementation of Executive Order 13853 to leverage private investment for environmental and human health outcomes through Opportunity Zones. OCR provides a variety of locally led, community-driven technical assistance programs to improve the environment while revitalizing and diversifying local economies, including Local Foods Local Places, Healthy Places for Healthy People, Recreation Economy for Rural Communities, Building Blocks for Community Revitalization, and Greening America's Communities. These programs promote more equitable

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investment in existing neighborhoods and reuse of infrastructure and underused properties, encourage planning to make communities more resilient to current and future economic shocks and natural hazards, protect rivers and streams with natural stormwater management techniques that also beautify parks and streets, improve air quality by reducing the need to drive and offering more transportation options, and support development patterns that more efficiently use resources such as energy and water.

Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ) implements Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice (EJ) by supporting integration of EJ at EPA through strategic planning and prioritization, coordination across the agency to track the impact of EJ activities and maintaining EJ coordinators in every region and national program. OEJ directs community support and engagement by providing grants and technical assistance, engaging directly with community stakeholders, and co-leading the cross-EPA Environmental Justice and Community Revitalization Council (EJCRC). OEJ provides external leadership on EJ by leading the Environmental Justice Inter-Agency Working Group (EJIWG); managing the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC); and supporting other agencies, states, tribes, and non-government organizations in consideration of EJ and meaningful engagement with communities.

Office of Federal Activities (OFA) is responsible for assuring federal compliance with NEPA and works with the programs to identify permitting strategies and policies to improve issuance of timely permits. OFA fulfills NEPA and the Clean Air Act requirements to review and comment on federal environmental impact statements (EIS) and manages the EIS filing process on behalf of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). OFA works collaboratively with Federal agencies to improve technical sufficiency and meet accelerated timelines on EISs. OFA is working to update the NEPA implementation procedures by no later than September 2021 to be consistent with the updated CEQ NEPA regulations. OFA reviews Antarctica environmental impact assessments. OFA's permit policy work ensures FAST-41 and EO 13807 (One Federal Decision) compliance and implementation, implements best practices for environmental reviews and permitting across the agency, and supports the agencywide permit backlog reduction efforts.

OP's **Smart Sectors Program** is a partnership program that provides a platform to collaborate with regulated sectors and develop sensible approaches that better protect the environment and public health. The program partners with more than 35 trade associations representing 13 sectors of the economy, creating an opportunity for EPA to consider more forward-thinking ways to improve environmental outcomes and conduct business. Smart Sectors program staff analyze data and advise on forward-thinking options for environmental improvement; conduct educational site visits and facilitate roundtables with EPA leadership; develop and update statistical reports that characterize the impact of each sector on the economy and the environment, and maintain meaningful, open dialogue with trade association partners, their environmental committees, and all of their member companies.

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OP houses the **EPA's Standards Executive** who supports and coordinates the agency's participation in private sector standards activities pursuant to the National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act. This work advances EPA's mission by using public resources more efficiently and by reducing regulatory burdens while ensuring environmental protections, spurring innovation, and fostering scientific exchange.

OP supports EPA's mission of protecting public health and the environment even as the climate changes. OP leads the **Cross-EPA Work Group on Climate Adaptation** and works externally to strengthen the resilience and adaptive capacity of states, tribes, and local communities across the nation through delivery of tools, training, technical assistance and data. OP maintains the **EPA's Climate Adaptation Resource Center (ARC-X)**, an interactive resource to help local government officials in all 40,000 communities across the nation anticipate, prepare for, and adapt to the impacts of climate change. OP also supports the development by universities of state-level versions of the ARC-X.

UPCOMING MILESTONES:

Specific Office of Policy actions, meetings, and/or deliverables that will occur during the first half of FY21 (until the end of March 2021)

ORPM

- Prepare EPA's Spring Regulatory Agenda

NCEE

- Release the SAB-reviewed version of the updated Guidelines for Preparing Economic Analyses in November-December of 2020
- In November of 2020, finalize a peer-reviewed version of the Economy-Wide model to enhance the agency's economic analyses of policy options

OCR

- Deliver workshops to 12-15 communities selected for Local Foods, Local Places Assistance in summer 2021.

OEJ

- Convene meeting of the NEJAC during the second quarter of FY21 (the EPA Administrator typically prioritizes attendance at NEJAC in-person meetings)
- Monthly, convene the Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice (EJ IWG); a new political appointee would typically prioritize attending one of these monthly meetings early in the administration to set direction for the EJ IWG
- Publish the FY20 EPA EJ annual report before the end of CY20

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OFA

- Draft proposed update to EPA's NEPA implementing procedures (40 CFR Part 6) to be sent to OMB in December 2020

Standards Executive

- Improve EPA staff access to standards documents
- Ensure the public has "reasonable availability" to the standards referenced by EPA.
- Promote consideration of the NTTAA earlier in the decision-making process for regulatory activities

KEY EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS:

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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Congress | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> States | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tribes | <input type="checkbox"/> Media | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other Federal Agencies |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NGO | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local Governments | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other public health experts and officials, medical providers, constituents associated with schools. | | | |

LEAD OFFICE/REGION: REGION 9

OTHER KEY OFFICES/REGIONS: ALL PROGRAM
OFFICES AND REGIONS

OP supports a variety of work in all 10 EPA offices and regions, both directly through EJ and NEPA FTE, and through engagement on a wide array of programmatic topics.